

"I SHOULD LIKE TO TRY TO PLACE THE CUBAN CHARGE AGAINST MY COUNTRY IN ITS PROPER PERSPECTIVE"
Statement Made by the U.S. Representative (Stevenson) in Committee I of the U.N. General Assembly, February 14, 1962 (Excerpts)¹⁸

As we approach at last the end of this prolonged and unnecessary debate, I should like to try to place the Cuban charge against my country in its proper perspective. Up to now the 16th General As-

¹⁸ U.N. doc. A/C.1/PV.1231, pp. 2-41. The statement was made at the first meeting of Committee I to consider agenda item 78 "Complaint by Cuba of Threats to International Peace and Security Arising from New Plans of Aggression and Acts of Intervention being Executed by the Government of the United States of America against the Revolutionary Government of Cuba".

¹⁹ U.N. doc. A/C.1/PV.1241, pp. 16-45.

²⁰ U.S.-U.N. press release 8925 (text as printed in the Department of State Bulletin, Apr. 2, 1962, pp. 553-559).

sembly has compiled a creditable record. We have dealt reasonably and responsibly, I believe, with the prior items on our agenda, and I think this is because the prior items were worthy of responsible discussion and of responsible action. Now, however, this Assembly, at its very end, has been forced to deal for 10 precious days with cold-war propaganda charges that are both irresponsible, unsupported, and wholly false.

This item has been placed on our agenda by Cuba not as an emergency, as its language suggests, but last August.¹⁰ And now, 6 months after this supposedly urgent item was inscribed, the members of this committee have been obliged to listen to repetitive and interminable harangues which have produced all of the abusive, the false, and the tired phrases in the Communist lexicon—but nothing resembling proof of the charges.

We have even been told that the American worker owes his automobile, his house, his dishwasher, and his refrigerator to the Russian revolution. Well, I suppose, Mr. Chairman, that we Americans should be thankful that our Communist friends have taken such good care of us first while neglecting themselves!

But we are not thankful for this intolerable imposition on the patience of this committee nor for this gross misuse of the machinery of the United Nations, which is not only a waste of the General Assembly's time but also an invitation to the detractors of the United Nations to heap fresh ridicule on our organization.

Our charter, Mr. Chairman, speaks of this place as a "center for harmonizing the actions of nations." Could anything be more disharmonizing than the unbridled vituperation to which we have been subjected by the Castro delegation and its Communist colleagues? That charges of aggression and intervention—unsupported by evidence and squarely denied—can be dredged up, after lying dormant for 6 months, and be solemnly paraded for 10 days before the representatives of 104 nations cannot enhance the reputation of this organization for seriousness or efficiency. And what a pity that at a time when there are some signs of sincere efforts to diminish the tensions between my country and the Soviet Union, the latter should have ordered its satellites to unleash such an unprincipled, unjustified, unsupported attack on the United States!

Now, what is the reason for this outburst of cold-war violence after this item has been pending for 6 months?

Clearly it is an attempt to drown in a torrent of words the unanimous—and I say unanimous—conclusion of the American Republics that it is the Communist offensive, of which Cuba is a part, which is trying to intervene in the domestic affairs of the American Republics and to destroy their free democratic institutions. It is an attempt to obscure the unanimous—and again I say unanimous—decision reached at Punta del Este by all of the American Republics that the Castro regime is incompatible with the principles and the objectives of the inter-American system.

¹⁰ The Cuban charge was initially made Aug. 8, 1961 (see U.N. doc. A/4832).

What precisely were these two unanimous decisions that they want to obscure and hide?

The first decision is found in Resolution I, entitled "Communist Offensive in America," contained in document S/5075, the Punta del Este Final Act,⁸⁰ and I should like to read you paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of that unanimous resolution:

These, gentlemen, are the words of the foreign ministers of all of the American Republics—except for Cuba. These words were based on a mass of evidence accumulated over the years by the Organization of American States and by the member states themselves, and in particular on a report of the Inter-American Peace Committee, which was dated January 14, 1962.

The facts are clear that the Castro regime, with the assistance of local Communist parties, is employing a wide variety of techniques and practices to overthrow the free democratic institutions of Latin America. It is bringing hundreds of Latin American students, labor leaders, intellectuals, and dissident political leaders to Cuba for indoctrination and for training to be sent back to their countries for the double purpose of agitating in favor of the Castro regime and undermining their own governments. It is fostering the establishment in other Latin American countries of so-called "Committees of Solidarity with the Cuban Revolution" for the same dual purpose. Cuban diplomatic personnel encourage and finance agitation and subversion by dissident elements seeking to overthrow established government by force.

The Cuban regime is flooding the hemisphere with propaganda and with printed material. The recent inauguration of a powerful short-wave radio station in Cuba now enables the regime to broadcast its propaganda to every corner of the hemisphere, and these broadcasts have not hesitated to call for the violent overthrow of established governments. Such appeals have been directed to Peru, Brazil, Guatemala, and, most recently, the Dominican Republic. On January 22, 1962, Radio Habana beamed a broadcast to the Dominican Republic calling on the people to "overthrow the Council of State"—the very democratic council which is now expressing the will of the Dominican people to be free of the last remnants of the Trujillo dictatorship.⁸¹

The military training of Latin Americans in Cuba by the Castro regime, and the wide distribution throughout the hemisphere of the treatise on guerrilla warfare by "Che" Guevara, Castro's chief lieutenant, are clear evidence that the Castro regime is bent on guerrilla operations as another important device for gaining its objectives. The large amounts of arms which Castro boasts of having obtained from the Communist military bloc place him in a position to support such operations, and, in fact, we have seen him aiding or supporting armed invasions in other Caribbean countries, notably Panama and the Dominican Republic. If we are to believe Castro's threats made prior

⁸⁰ *Ante*, doc. III-12.

⁸¹ See *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1961*, pp. 326-338.

to and during the Punta del Este conference, there will almost certainly be further Cuban-inspired guerrilla operations against its Latin American neighbors.

Now, what this means, Mr. Chairman, is that Cuba today represents a bridgehead of Sino-Soviet imperialism in the Western Hemisphere and a base for Communist aggression, intervention, agitation, and subversion against the American Republics. It is small wonder that the American Republics unanimously recognize that this situation is a serious threat to their security and the ability of their peoples to choose freely their own form of government and to pursue freely their goals of economic well-being and of social justice. It is small wonder that they unanimously adopted the resolution I have just quoted in part and small wonder that the Communists are throwing up a smokescreen in an attempt to conceal that unanimity.

Now, what was the second unanimous decision that they want to conceal?

It is found in the first two operative paragraphs of Resolution VI of the Punta del Este Final Act, entitled "Exclusion of the Present Government of Cuba From Participation in the Inter-American System."

I read as follows from that resolution:

[Ambassador Stevenson read the first two paragraphs.]

Those paragraphs, Mr. Chairman, were agreed to by the unanimous vote of the 20 American Republics, with Cuba alone dissenting. We have then a unanimous decision that the Cuban regime has made itself incompatible with the inter-American system.

There were two further operative paragraphs, which I quote:

[Ambassador Stevenson quoted paragraphs 3 and 4 of Res. VI.]

As to these two paragraphs, 14 countries—that is to say, two-thirds of the membership—voted in favor, 1 against—Cuba—and 6 abstained—Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Bolivia, and Ecuador. Their abstention, as has been made clear, in no way affects the decision that the Castro regime is incompatible with the American system of democratic freedom but merely evidenced doubts as to the legal procedures involved in the exclusion caused by the incompatibility.

Now, so much for the Punta del Este decisions that Castro is trying to hide by the unsupported claim that the United States is now planning aggression against Cuba. What supposed items of evidence has the Cuban representative produced to substantiate that wild claim? Only two.

First, he says that on October 9, 1961, "the revolutionary government denounced the military bases, both within and without the United States, listing those in which the American Government trained mercenaries in order to use them against our country." This ex parte declaration by the revolutionary government of Cuba is followed by a list of most of the noted Florida winter resorts, such as West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood, St. Petersburg, and so forth.

I have no doubt that the Castro government did "denounce" these localities, for certainly denunciation is a daily pastime in Habana these days. But denunciation is not proof, and they have not produced a shred of evidence that the United States Government is training anyone anywhere to attack Cuba. And I in turn denounce any such absurd denunciations.

Secondly, the Castro representative quoted from the *New York Times* of December 23, 1961, where one Luis Manuel Martinez, presumably a Cuban, is said to have stated that "nearly 400 exile fighters have left Guatemala in the last six weeks for the United States for eventual duty as guerrillas in Cuba." It may very well be that a Cuban patriot may have made such a statement, but I repeat that the United States is not training any Cuban exile fighters anywhere to attack Cuba.

Now, these two items, Castro's own assertion and the Martinez quotation, are the only—literally only—supposed evidence advanced for the charge that the United States is now planning aggression against Cuba.

And here I want to repeat that all of the charges that the Castro regime has made against the United States in this room were made at Punta del Este—every one—and that the American Republics, who of all people know the facts as to what goes on in this hemisphere, brushed these charges aside, just as they should be brushed aside here in this committee.

Now that the Castro representative has brought up the *New York Times* of December 23, 1961, I would like to call the committee's attention to another item in that same issue which the Cuban representative did not see fit to quote. That item is a report from Habana quoting Castro as having said on the previous day, December 22, that he was a "Marxist-Leninist" during his mountain guerrilla warfare days and that he had hidden the fact "because otherwise he would not have been able to press his revolution to a successful conclusion." He is quoted as going on to say that while in the mountains if he had said, "We are Marxist-Leninists," "it is possible that we would never have been able to descend to the lowlands. . . . So we called it something else." Those are the words of Mr. Castro.

Mr. Castro, blatantly and cynically, admits and boasts that he deliberately deceived the Cuban people.

I now come to the attempt by the representative of the Soviet Union to turn this debate into a propaganda quiz program.

Most of the so-called "questions" which he has asked related to events last April which were thoroughly discussed and dealt with at that time by this committee and by the General Assembly.²² But he purports to be very distressed that I have not answered his questions. It is not my practice, as I hope you have noticed, to intervene every few minutes but rather to await my turn. But I do not want the representative of the Soviet Union to suffer any longer.

²² See *ibid.*, pp. 292-294, 298, and 303.

So as to his other declarations, let me say, no, the United States is not training anyone for an invasion of Cuba at the "bases" mentioned by the Cuban representative. Neither the Soviet representative nor the Cuban representative nor anyone else has brought forth the slightest evidence to the contrary. And Castro's "denunciation" of such innocent winter resorts as West Palm Beach, Sarasota, and so forth, is proof of nothing but a very vivid and unscrupulous imagination.

The next question: Yes, Cubans may enlist in the Armed Forces of the United States, and so may any permanent resident of the United States. Our latest count, as of 2 weeks ago, showed that the number of Cubans in the three armed services of this country amounted to a grand total of 88.

The next question: No, all the decisions at the Punta del Este conference were not unanimous. This was not a meeting of the Warsaw military pact. This was a meeting of free and independent sovereign states, proudly insistent on the democratic rights of freedom of speech and freedom of decision.

So that the record is completely clear to all of the members, I want to state the votes on the nine resolutions which are set forth in the Final Act of the Punta del Este conference (document S/5075).

[Ambassador Stevenson stated the vote on each of the resolutions as indicated in the annotations to doc. III-12, *ante*.]

In short, Mr. Chairman, Cuba received no support on anything. No one voted with Cuba on anything. Cuba joined the others in voting for only one paragraph of one resolution, and there was not a single negative vote, other than Cuba's, on any resolution or any paragraph of any resolution. In other words, the newest associate of the Communist bloc stood alone in the self-imposed isolation which its interventions and disregard of human rights have brought upon itself.

Now, these are the facts about Punta del Este, and they show that what is before this committee is not some bilateral issue between the Castro government and the Government of the United States but a broad multilateral problem involving a self-declared Communist regime's aggressive hostility against all of the free nations of the Latin American world. It is not a bilateral problem; it is a hemispheric problem.

My final answer to the representative of the Soviet Union is yes, the United States does believe in the principle of nonintervention in the affairs of other countries and we strongly recommend this principle to the Cuban regime, especially with reference to its neighbors in this hemisphere.

And while we are on the subject of nonintervention, I would strongly recommend to the Soviet Union that our memories are not so short that we have forgotten some events of recent years which are still on our agenda.

I have heard during the past fortnight repeated contemptuous references to the Cuban patriots who have escaped from the oppression of the Castro dictatorship and the names of a few industrialists and land owners. But I have not heard mention of no less than 150,000

Cubans who have fled from tyranny to liberty—of 150,000 workers, peasants, shopkeepers, professional people, artisans, professors, and judges—many of them former comrades of Castro—who fled when it became clear to them that he had deceived them and betrayed their revolution. They are the fortunate ones who have escaped the knock on the door in the night and drumhead justice and the firing squads that have slaughtered so many of Castro's countrymen.

I read you a short list of Castro's own comrades who now know what he represents and have escaped to freedom: Castro's first Prime Minister, the first Provisional President of his revolutionary government, his Chief Justice, nearly two-thirds of the 19 members of his first Cabinet, his revolutionary commander of Camagüey Province, his appointees as presidents of the National Bank and the National Development Bank, the chief of his Air Force, his personal pilot, the General Secretary of the Cuban Trade Union Federation, the editor of the anti-Batista magazine *Bohemia*, the author of Castro's revolutionary exhortation "history will absolve me," and countless other editors, radio commentators, and public figures.

—These are some of the millions who have fled Communist tyranny in search of freedom. We have heard some dissertations on the Marxist-Leninist ideology from a procession of Communist speakers during this debate. I certainly will not take up the committee's time to more than say that millions of voices will answer them—the voices not only of 150,000 Cubans but of 200,000 Hungarians, of 55,000 Tibetans, of 1,100,000 Chinese, of 2,500,000 East Germans, and many more who have risked their lives to escape from that ideology and that form of government to the free world. And the final confession of ideological bankruptcy is that it takes a wall through the heart of Berlin not to keep the enemies out but to keep their own people in.

It has been suggested over and over that in some way the American Republics are interfering with Cuba's right of self-determination, the right of its people to choose their own government. This is not true. The American Republics believe in and practice self-determination. It is the Castro regime itself that has deprived the Cuban people of that right.

I hope, Mr. Chairman, that this committee will resoundingly defeat any resolution that equates unsupported charges and the decisions of the American states to defend themselves from subversion and to work together for that better life in full conformity with the principles of the charter.²²

²² The First Committee had before it for consideration a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.309), submitted by the Representatives of Czechoslovakia and Rumania, Feb. 2, 1962, which read:

"The General Assembly,
Deeply concerned over the tense situation in the Caribbean Sea area, the

continuation of which is likely to increase the threat to universal peace and security.

"Recalling that it is a permanent aim of the United Nations to develop friendly relations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and non-interference in the internal affairs of any State,

"1. Makes an urgent appeal to the Government of the United States of America to put an end to the interference in the internal affairs of the Republic of Cuba and to all the actions directed against the territorial integrity and political independence of Cuba;

"2. Calls upon the Government of Cuba and the United States of America to settle their differences by peaceful means, through negotiations, without recourse to use of force."

In a paragraph-by-paragraph vote, taken Feb. 15, only the second preambular paragraph was adopted, and the resolution itself was therefore rejected.